

## *Wilderness House Literary Review 2/2*

No One Dies at the Au BonPain By Doug Holder  
2007; 28pp; Pa; sunnyoutside, POB 441429, Somerville, MA  
02144. \$8.00. <http://sunnyoutside.com>

Reviewed by Hugh Fox.

First off, a little background. There are a couple of Au Bon Pain coffee houses in the Boston area. My own favorite is in Harvard Square. Doug Holder is the mythical, revered, super-star head of Ibbetson Street Press in Somerville.

And the whole book here has a certain mythical-classical feel about it. Like St. Augustine or San Juan de la Cruz had come back reincarnated and started re-meditating on death, time, the meaning of life:

"I am not afraid of bones./I trace them/through a facade of flesh.../and there/is always/the joke/of a skeleton/under the myth/of the most beautiful woman.//Bones--/they are what/make us/most human. ( I Am Not Afraid of Bones, p.9).

The poetry gets even scarier when it gets medical, moves out of philosophical-theological theory into things like colonoscopies: "In the funeral parlor bathroom/I thought/odd/how the light/seems to divinely illuminate me/through the stained glass window/as if I was part of a purifying ritual./I strained and strained/and wondered about/that test/and how long/I have before/that dreaded/rest. (Colonoscopy, p.21).

Always a sense of impending doom as a normal component of daily living:

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"that short/tenuous last breath/that will surely be/the death//of me. (My Life: In Contrast with Others, p.24).

Amazingly effective, what we have here are classic, condensed meditations on what it's all about in a context of eventual annihilation. A volume to be on the shelves next to Keats, Whitman, Rimbaud.

Hugh Fox/Ibbetson Update